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SHERWIN'S

Weekly Political Register.

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TO LORD SIDMOUTH,

*On the Murder of the Four Men in the Old Bailey, on a
Charge of Forgery.*

MY LORD,

THE part you have acted relative to the men recently executed at the Old Bailey has excited a stronger feeling of indignation in the public mind than any other act of your political life. In former cases of cruelty the odium has in a considerable degree been removed from your shoulders, by the supposition that you were *a weak man acting under the direction of others*. Your guilt was in some degree excused by ~~your~~ mental imbecility, and the blacker part of ~~your~~ crimes was pardoned on the score of your being merely the agent of men of a worse description. You were more pitied as a *fool* than detested as a *knav*. But in the present instance the case is totally different. Whatever doubts as to your character might previously exist, they have been completely removed by your conduct on the present occasion. Here the guilt of the deed is all your own. The power to have saved the poor men from an ignominious death was in your hands, and you have voluntarily and barbarously become their executioner.

It is almost superfluous to offer any observations on the infamous system which gives rise to the commission of forgery. The brutality with which the parties in this swindling paper system pursue their victims, is without precedent.

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It has generally been understood, that in the distinction which they made relative to the capital and the minor offence, they were guided by the *circumstances* of the case; that it was only where the offence was peculiarly aggravated that they tried their prisoners on the capital charge. Supposing even this—supposing that the Bank acted with perfect impartiality in the exercise of this discretionary power—still it is leaving a great deal to their judgment. No set of men, and particularly a set of *interested* men, ought to be the arbiters of their own cause. They may *wish* to act fairly, but their *judgment* ought always to be suspected.

In the present instance, however, the peculiar aggravation of circumstances cannot be pleaded as an apology for the brutal transaction. From what motive the selection was made does not appear, but from the evidence given on the various trials, *it does* appear that in many instances where the minor charge only was brought forward, the offence was much more aggravated. The only visible motive which has actuated the Bank is contained in this expression, “*out of so many trials we must have a certain number of executions*,”—and they appear to have taken their victims indiscriminately, without any reference to the justice of the *case* whatever.

These proceedings, my Lord, we are told are according to law; or at least they are allowed by those who are employed to administer the law. *It is the reverse of the law of England*, and would be punished as a flagrant violation of it, if acted by any other set of men than paper money swindlers. But the laws of England are nothing when put in competition with the wishes and inclinations of Bank Directors. The law can either be obeyed or disobeyed at their pleasure, and their friends in the Cabinet and on the Bench are ever ready to second the arbitrary violation.

I have already noticed some of the peculiarities attending the case of the unfortunate men, but the worst part of the subject is yet to be noticed. The petition of these men is already before the public. This forcible and eloquent appeal to the feelings of the Prince Regent was forwarded for the purpose of presentation, and when we view the agita-

tion of the public mind on the subject; the interest which has been shewn by all ranks of society, save the hardened, heartless aristocracy; and particularly when we view the distressing nature of the case, heightened as it was by the previous acquittals, it was not too much to expect that such a petition would receive an *answer*. Life and death are of too much importance to be trifled with, and the silly, senseless etiquette which has in former instances rendered petitions useless, ought to have been laid aside on this occasion.— It was no common case; and it was viewed by the public with no common anxiety. *Your Lordship's* cold flinty heart might look down with indifference on the probable murder of these men, but to the honour of the British public there were thousands who viewed their situation with very different feelings. In such a case, it would scarcely be deemed too much for the Prince Regent to have returned an *answer* to the petition. It would have been no extraordinary act of condescension to have done so. But your master thought otherwise. He thought it was *too much trouble* to attend to the grievances of his subjects. He was not to be disturbed from his beds of roses to hear and answer the tale of misery. His moments were too valuable and his abilities too much engaged to permit him to be occupied in discharging the duties of his station. He therefore delegated this to your *Lordship*; that is, he made you not only the adviser but the ordainer and executor of the royal will. There are those who on viewing this case, will ask what is *the use* of a prince who declares that he will not have anything to do with his duty? What is *the use* of an office, where its duties can and are performed by deputy, and that too by a man whose shallowness of mind is a national proverb? What is *the use* of giving a man a million a year who is too lazy to hear, and too unfeeling to answer the prayers of his subjects? It would puzzle the abilities of the whole Cabinet, and of your Master included, to give a satisfactory answer to these questions.

But it was not merely the petition of the unfortunate men, which claimed the attention of your Master. There

was another petition which proceeded from a most respectable meeting of the Ward of Bread Street, on the same subject. This, one would have thought, would have brought forth an answer. But the obdurate heart of your Master, like your own, was too deeply entombed in the sepulchre of sensual brutality, to be awakened to sympathy or remorse. You had the *power* to perpetrate a legal murder, and though mercy could never have reflected greater honour on your character, than in this instance, yet you had not the generosity to extend it. To have pardoned these poor men, would have served to wipe away the remembrance of some of your former transactions; but this motive, strong as it must have been, was not sufficiently powerful to overcome your thirst for human blood. The following extract from the Bread Street petition, will shew the nature of the evidence on which these poor men have been sacrificed:—

“ It appears to your Petitioners, that upon a revisal of the circumstances under which WILLIAM WELLER and GEORGE CASHMAN have been convicted, your Royal Highness will be induced to believe they have been the victims of a base conspiracy on the part of the witnesses for the prosecution; who, taking advantage of the surreptitious mode in which evidence is sought after by the agents for the Bank, have fabricated the charges against them; or at least have been the principal promptors of the offence, which they have pretended to detect.

“ That the characters of the witnesses for the prosecution are such as to entitle them to no credit; the one ANN FEAR, being confessedly employed and paid by the Bank to entrap others into the utterance of forged notes, for which offence her husband is now under sentence of transportation, and whose pardon is the evident reward at which she aims, (if she be not taught to expect it) for the destruction of these men, by her evidence. The other JOSEPH GUY, is an individual who, having abandoned his wife, lives in a criminal connection with the sister of Ann Fear, the other witness: and he is supplied with money by the father of the prostitute with whom he cohabits:—so that the most charitable interpretation of his testimony is, that it was given with a view to obtain the pardon of the husband of his fellow witness, who is also the son of the man who supplies him with money, and the brother of the woman for whom he has abandoned his wife.

“ The close connection of these parties, if it do not absolutely prove the existence of a conspiracy against the individuals under

orders for execution, is of such a nature as to destroy all the credibility of their evidence; the depositions of both can only be considered as a concerted tale, which the presence of the witnesses in court during the whole of the trial, enabled them to repeat without variation."

In addition to the above, it appears that the evidence against Driscoll, was of a still more dubious nature, the depositions stating the offence to be committed in one parish, while the evidence proved, (as far as such evidence can be said to prove *any thing*) that the offence was committed in another. It is always understood, that the law of England says, that *all doubts shall be decided in favour of the prisoner*. But neither doubts, nor certainties, were allowed to operate in favour of these poor men. The determination of the Bank, and of the Bench, was to *hang them*, and in this determination, they were amply seconded by the complying baseness of your Lordship.

Your Lordship may think the life of a *poor* man, to be a mere trifle. It is the fashion among such persons as yourself, to look upon the *poor* as a parcel of brutes, who are created, to be devoured at the pleasure of the rich. This, *once* was the case with the majority of the *middle class* of people in this country; it was so, indeed, till within the last two or three years, but now the case is *totally* altered. The middle class have began to see that *their* interest, and the interest of the *poor* are the same thing, and the barbarous conduct of the Government, and of the Bank, only serves to extend this generous principle. Your cruelty, and the cruelty of others who are placed in high stations, will, in the end, be the ruin of your detestable system.

From the stories which we have been accustomed to hear relative to your piety, your benevolence and your humanity, a person would be led to conclude that it was impossible you could lend your sanction to such a deed of blood as the one which forms the subject of this letter. There could not possibly have been a case in which your *humanity* could have been displayed to better advantage. And as for *piety*,

if piety means the serving of God by acting with mercy and forbearance towards the beings of his creation, there could not have been a better opportunity for convincing the world that you possessed it. But the fact is, you are a base, bigotted, hard hearted, cold blooded man : your piety is a mere affectation intended to cover your guilt, and to make your cruelty palatable. Your pretended benevolence and humanity are affected from the same motives. You are worse than any of your colleagues in office, inasmuch as that to the single character of *villain*, you have added that of a *mean, pitiful, dastardly hypocrite*. You have shewn in this transaction, that you possess all the cool, deliberate blood-thirsty mindedness of Castlereagh or Silvester, while you affect to act upon the hypocritical meekness of Wilberforce. You are a compound of vice, or of vice and something worse than vice, for your acts are not only calculated to excite our abhorrence, but to raise our disgust. You have not the hardihood to play the villain with a bold face; but you perpetrate the worst of actions, while you pretend to be virtuous.

If ever there was a murder committed in the ~~name~~ of the law, the deed to which you have lent your sanction is one. It makes no difference because you did not commit the deed with your own hands. If the men were MURDERED, YOU WERE THE MURDERER. It signifies not that you *escape* the punishment due to the perpetrator of so foul a deed. The voice of public opinion, the hoarse voice of public indignation proclaims your guilt, and I most sincerely hope this voice will be the forerunner of national vengeance. It is time that men's lives should be properly estimated ; it is time that the poor should be protected ; and it is time that the State miscreant should be brought to justice. That the day of justice is fast approaching is very evident to every one, except such senseless bigotted men as yourself. And when that dreadful day shall arrive, may you have a jury of honest Englishmen to decide upon your guilt ; but when you shall supplicate that mercy which you have denied to others, may the cup of bitterness be retorted upon your own lips ; may your prayers be heard with disdainful silence, and may you be sacrificed to the just vengeance of an indignant Nation.

In the hope that I shall live to see, not only you, but the whole of your colleagues brought to justice, I remain the inveterate enemy of your Lordship, and of every sanguinary State russian,

W. T. SHERWIN.

To THE EDITOR OF THE POLITICAL REGISTER.

SIR,

December 13th, 1818.

THE performance of promise seems to be absolutely necessary to the very existence of confidence among the members of human society. It matters little whether promise be implied or explicit. It is the part of a mean and cowardly mind to seek evasion in such distinctions. Of these principles I may, hereafter, make a more important use. At present, they are mentioned merely as my excuse for giving you and the public this farther trouble. I have pledged myself, to use a slang phrase, authorised by the vicious usage of Parliament only, "to examine the transactions of the last Westminster Meeting at the Crown and Anchor, and particularly the observation of the Honourable Baronet, 'that Major Cartwright's election cannot, on account of some circumstances, be carried in Westminster'." That pledge I am now going to redeem, and want only a patient hearing, in order, to disabuse the country on several subjects with which it is but imperfectly acquainted.*

The meeting at the Crown and Anchor was opened by a speech from Sir Francis Burdett; who was previously announced as the chairman, in the summons of the corporation.† I do not stop to examine into the right of the corporation to nominate the chairman, or to call together the electors. The rights of corporations often grow out of custom, and I am not sufficiently versed in the history of this corporation to judge of the extent of its jurisdiction over the citizens of Westminster. I presume, however, that Sir Francis Burdett is not Mayor, at least, not perpetual Mayor of that city. Be this as it may, the first thing that struck every person of reflection was, that the *requisition* for the assemblage of the citizens was not read by the Honourable Baronet, or the *names* of the members of the corporation who had signed that requisition. How can this be accounted

* I wish it to be particularly understood, that I am not the person who subscribes himself "LEONIDAS," in the Examiner on last Sunday.

† The rump.

for? Did he mean to pay them a high compliment by this omission? It was suspected by several that the reverse was at least implied. In most cities and boroughs, the corporate body does not consist of persons of great consideration, for wealth, character, and education. Is the corporation of Westminster of the same description? Was *that* the feeling which induced Sir Francis to consign the names of those who had appropriated the chair to him, to silence and oblivion? Let them pluck that goose between them, and decide as they please which paid the greater compliment to the other.

In the next place, having heard the Baronet speak but once before at the memorable meeting in the Easter week of the year 1817, in Palace Yard, when Major Cartwright's resolutions obliged him to an unpleasant explicitness on the question of Parliamentary Reform, I was exceedingly struck with the *shrillness and exility of voice*, with which Sir Francis Burdett addressed the meeting. This is a defect of nature, but it is a most unfortunate defect in the advocate of popular rights, for such is the character which the Baronet assumes. "How can this man," said I, "plead effectually a cause which requires no ordinary endowments of mind and body, no ordinary exertion of voice and powers of persuasion? This piping, this whining, this lachrymore exhibition, is singularly insufficient *here*; how can it, unless it be compensated by almost a miraculous eminence, and ascendancy of talent, produce a deep impression on the House of Commons, influenced as it is by every possible indisposition to submit to the force of the most convincing argumentation, supported by every advantage and grace of a manly elocution and overwhelming eloquence? *Here*, the auditory is inclined to applaud, before the Baronet opens his lips, to cheer his weakest observations, to give him credit for sense and virtue and every thing, whether he possess them or not; and yet I see no burst of feeling communicating itself from heart to heart, penetrating through all the recesses of the room; nothing but a brawling vociferation, without any attendant glistening of the eye, without any genuine, glowing, grand agitation vibrating from side to side, and corruscating from face to face. Will the House bow, in conscious succumbence, to the most cogent reasoning, to the most persuasive appeal, carried on the air by a voice so monotonous, so impotent, so puling, so melancholy?"

Willing, however, to direct my attention to the matter of the speech of the Baronet, I found it impossible not to be

surprised at the *want of talent*, generally, which that speech exhibited. Many others, from the very commencement of Sir Francis Burdett's political career, had augured ill of the cause of Reform under his auspices, from a want of weight, a want of abilities, which they thought they had discovered on his part. "Sir Francis will never do so," said they, "as the leader of any party. He is inadequate to the task. He is deficient in those mental powers which are absolutely requisite in such a leader." The speech in question was a full confirmation of this presentiment. It would be too humiliating a labour to report the meagre common places by which it was distinguished. A most singular feature in it, however, cannot be overlooked. A secret and lurking art, a sort of undexterous dexterity, a small cunning, pervaded its principal component parts. Nothing is more certain than that artifice is an incontrovertible proof either of a bad cause or of a bad advocate. It is a sure indication of a mind that grovels low, that is incapable of a towering flight into the losty regions of imagination and genius. Some example of this, however, is necessary; for though it is not brought forward as a proof of deficiency of principle, but merely as a mark of imbecility of intellect, it is a charge too serious to be left without confirmation.

Let it be remembered, therefore, that Sir Francis Burdett, after calling for unanimity among his audience, told them that their greatest difficulty was, not to find a proper object of their choice, but to fix on *one* only who should be worthy of their suffrages; they were not perplexed through want, but through abundance; there were so many who were worthy of their support. I am not quite clear, whether it was in his opening or in his concluding speech he made the further observation, that the election of the gentleman who had the best claims on their support, Major Cartwright, could not, on account of some circumstance, be carried in Westminster. I appeal to every man, not bloated with folly and prejudice and stupidity, if all this was not mere finesse, to use the mildest term. It is clear to a demonstration, that the Baronet, so far from thinking that there was an abundance of proper persons to represent Westminster, would not have given a cordial countenance to *any one* of the candidates for public favour, whom he must suppose the electors of Westminster would understand him to mean.

Every man in Westminster would instantly turn his mind's eye towards Major Cartwright, towards Mr. Cobbett,

towards Mr. J. T. Clark, and many towards Mr. Hunt, who, as I shall shew, when conducting himself with a firmness and propriety unexampled, I will venture to say, in the history of popular contests, was assailed with every species of brutal outrage, short of personal mutilation, by the friends of Sir Francis in the last Westminster Election, without any known check from the Baronet, which, if he had given it, would have added a grace to his name which he will never attain from any cleverness of management which he may successfully display. Who, then, constituted this abundance which offered itself for selection to the people of Westminster? Mr. Kinnaird, forsooth, of whom no public act whatever was known, and no private act that deserved particular approbation. He was, indeed, as the friends of the Baronet, without contradiction, affirmed, *his* personal friend, which proves merely that Sir Francis selects his personal friends without reference to any public qualifications, and thinks them objects of public favour without public merit. The Baronet, with most legitimate and logical accuracy, announced that Mr. Kinnaird *withdrew* himself. He had been decidedly *rejected* by the electors of Westminster, who did not think his personal friendship with Sir Francis any proof of his claim to their choice. Then there was Mr. Fawkes and Sir Charles Wolseley, to be sure. But where were they? Not in the contemplation, assuredly, of the people addressed. Mr. Cobbett, too, must be mentioned, who certainly was present to the minds of most of the auditors. Mr. J. T. Clark was *not* mentioned, who has all the qualifications that the Baronet's personal friends could have, and many, very many, which they have not; who had even some qualifications which Sir Francis finds wanting in some of those whom he most strenuously resists, a certain rank in society, a liberal education, a handsome fortune, and perfect independence. I do not mention his talents, because those most disliked have talents too, and the want of talents we have a right to say would not be an objection with Sir Francis Burdett. There is, indeed, a choice, a great choice, such is the change of times and circumstances, of men zealously devoted to the cause of Parliamentary, radical Parliamentary Reform. Many such were, doubtless, in the view of the electors of Westminster. But the choice was small, indeed, of those whom the Baronet considered as worthy of support. Most of those in his meagre list would be opposed, at least, by *his friends*, the corporation of Westminster, from the opinion that they

would be doing *him* service, or gratifying *his* wishes. He mentioned, besides these and the gentleman who withdrew, another, Mr. Hobhouse. Of Mr. Hobhouse I will speak in a future communication. Let me now notice the extraordinary declaration of the Baronet, that the election of Major Cartwright cannot be carried in Westminster.

In my former letter I said that this observation requires a most exact scrutiny, because it will appear to be, in all its circumstances, most extraordinary as coming from Sir Francis Burdett. Major Cartwright had been, on most occasions, described by Sir Francis as *his friend*. On what ground was he *friend*? On public ground, certainly; the expression must always have been so understood. Well, it was once considered a sufficient qualification in a candidate for Westminster to be Sir Francis Burdett's *personal* friend, for no other qualification could then be produced, founded on any proof but bare assertion. The *political* friend of the Baronet could not, however, be successfully supported in Westminster! Who said this? To whom was it spoken? To the corporation and electors of Westminster that were assembled at the Crown and Anchor. The understandings of the people of Westminster must be impenetrable if they see not their degradation in those circumstances. They will not, then, support the election of a radical Reformer, a political friend of Sir Francis; they are not expected to do it; but they were almost peremptorily required to elect his personal friend. Is this said of you, and to you, ye men of Westminster? Are all your professions, is all your bustle, come to this? You have, then, if you believed your *beloved candidate*, as Mr. Sturch called him, no real principle by which you are guided! Parliamentary Reform is a secondary object with you! Is it not extraordinary that this should be said by Sir Francis, of his friend and of his friends? Of many of you, it is known that this is not worthy, however it may suit the corporation and some *personal* friends. Although it was not uncommon to hear some disapprobation of universal suffrage and annual parliaments among the mere Burdettites during the last election, and though one of them said, that this *damned* nonsense about universal suffrage and annual Parliaments in Sir Francis's motion had ruined him in Westminster; yet, you, electors of Westminster generally, are in earnest, and guided by principle. Convinced of this, I am ready to avow the belief, founded on close observation of the course of the last election, that nothing prevented you then from carrying the election of

Major Cartwright, triumphantly and even without opposition, but the obtrusion on you of the personal friend of your present representative. If any thing not proved by actual existence can be certain, this is certain. It is equally certain, that had it not been for a most patriotic, though in my opinion a mistakenly patriotic, sacrifice on your part, Sir Francis Burdett *would not have been returned*. No man, who has the least sense of moral integrity, can deny this; it was notorious. Had not the Major's committee, composed of some of the most virtuous and enlightened men of the city, dissolved themselves, and united their efforts with those of the Baronet, Sir Francis Burdett would, to a demonstration, have been *ousted*. It was a painful sacrifice, but the friends of Major Cartwright made it, with the Major at their head. They now see how they are rewarded! The friend, the political friend, of Sir Francis cannot be carried for Westminster! They positively *gave* him the seat which he occupies, and does not one good turn deserve another? Had the Baronet divested himself of the little, trimming, shuffling management which he has long preserved, and of which the gallant Cochrane felt the effects on his liberation from bondage; had he come forward, first to the corporation, and then to the citizens, and frankly told them the truth, that he owed his seat to the sacrifice of feeling and of noble ambition which actuated the Major and his friends, nothing human could now prevent the election of the veteran Reformer. Could not Sir Francis and the corporation effect this, supported as they would be by so great a number of the wisest and best of their fellow-citizens?

Men of small minds and easy consciences are shrewd guessers. The disinterestedness of the Major and his friends had been once proved, and it might have suggested to persons of equal generosity, the propriety of meeting it with reward. But what says dexterity? "We do not like the Major on account of his zeal and activity, and especially on account of his talent, his sincerity, his explicitness. It was he that forced on a motion for Radical Reform, which has brought on us an obloquy, which we never meant to encounter. We were rejoiced with our popularity. But now is a storm which he has brought upon us which will be long in subsiding. Reform is a good word; and radical reform, universal suffrage, annual parliaments, those we could now and then utter, when nobody heeded us. But why force us to commit ourselves? Besides, the Major wears an unfashionable coat, which the Baronet does not like. We will

not say this, but we will say that he is old, that he can do nothing at his advanced age. This, to be said, is not our meaning; we are, on the contrary, afraid he will be too active; he will be independent of our favourite; if any thing should be done, it will be done by him, and our favourite will be a mere seconder of his motions, or, perhaps, absent, or even hostile; and this would not be pleasant. At all events, what the Major would have, will be on the records of Parliament, and of our favourite, there will be no trace, but a motion supported by garbled extracts from old Kings' speeches. We must keep him out at all events. We will not ask the Baronet what his wishes are; he will be too prudent to avow them. But we know very well what will please him. At all events, we shall know from his manner, from his silence, how he would have us to act, when we explain ourselves to him as meaning to keep out Cartwright. And if he will tell the people of Westminster, that the Major's election cannot be carried, we want to know no more of his desires. Indeed, if he would resolutely say, I am, in gratitude to the Major, in friendship, in political consistency, in public principle, bound to avow myself as favourable to his cause, we must return him; for we must be for and with Sir Francis. As to the Major and his friends, they are too disinterested to come forward to oppose us, for that would secure the election of the court candidate. Thus our course is safe. They will not endanger the cause, so seriously advocated by them, by doing it this injury. If we are not disposed to act in the same manner, what does that signify? Our favourite will be less embarrassed by Sir Murray Maxwell, than by Cartwright. Let him and his friends come forward, and though we shall certainly fail of our object, we shall gain one only second to it in eligibility; we shall keep him from annoying Sir Francis with eternal activity, about Parliamentary Reform, which, in its present definition, with zealous reformers, is unpopular." Such is the language of finesse. But such is not the language of the good men, with the Major at their head, who sacrifice all private feeling to public objects. They could, by a single movement, render the election of Mr. Hobhouse hopeless. Opposed by the Major, he would infallibly be rejected in Westminster. It will be to the Major and his friends, to their virtue, honour, and zeal, that Mr. Hobhouse, if elected, will owe his return. By standing forward, the Major would not probably be representative for Westminster, because the Corporation would not act by him the disinterested part

which he acts by them. Were it not so, it would be proved by the fact, that the Baronet's words, that the Major cannot be returned, have no foundation, and that there is no danger but what originates with the party of Sir Francis Burdett. The Major and his friends now, as in the last election, think that of two evils they should choose the least. In this I do not agree with them. My advice would be that they should put the Baronet and his friends fairly to the test, that the world might see *why* his election cannot be carried for Westminster, when he is publicly acknowledged by Sir Francis as the *most proper* representative. More would be gained to the cause, by this developement of truth, and this trial of principle, than by any temporary and partial advantage gained by a successful repulse of the minion of the court. The declaration of Mr. Hobhouse, also, would be put to the proof, that he would withdraw, if the people of Westminster should pronounce that they deemed another more worthy of their support. Indeed, it would add an infinite grace to the character of the Baronet and Mr. Hobhouse, if they were both strenuously to countenance the election of *the acknowledged most fit and deserving representative*.

In fine, I consider the Baronet's observations respecting Major Cartwright, are merely a dexterous intimation of his own wishes, a cue for the guidance of his friends in Westminster. The compliments which he paid the Major, do not at all militate with this conclusion, as the Baronet appears to my mind. To me, Sir Francis now appears, and has always appeared, as too slight a man to be the supporter of the public cause, such as it is now considered. In him, the love of popularity seems to be more powerful than principle, and a defect of talents, to be supplied by dexterity of management. As an orator, he is not quite contemptible, but he is certainly unworthy of comment. His poor, shuffling and piteous embarrassment, in speaking of the loss of Sir Samuel Romily, was productive of real suffering. He would say, and he would not say; he was afraid of saying too much and too little. Alas! for thee, "Westminster's pride and England's hope."

As I proposed to tread backward in the story of Westminster, from the last meeting at the Crown and Anchor, my next letter will, probably, begin, at least, with some other circumstances of that meeting, and proceed, perhaps, to a few observations on the last Westminster election. I consider this as likely, because it is my purpose to cause Mr. Hunt and Mr. Hobhouse then to pass in review. Of both

I have much to say, and with your leave, will say a part, at least, of what I know and think. You perceive that I do not profess attachment to *the cause*, as, without definition, it is familiarly called. That cause, if I understand it, has little to merit a philosophical reformer's support, except as it may be the first link in the chain of political revolution, through which the world is evidently proceeding. Truth is my object, and the influence which unmixed truth must have on the wisdom and happiness of the human race.

LEONIDAS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE POLITICAL REGISTER.

SIR,

I TRUST you will allow me the insertion of some observations on the unwarrantable prevalence of a disposition in the "*Lower Orders*" to investigate, and, according to their ideas of correctness and truth, to condemn the conduct of their superiors. This disposition has not only manifested itself in the condemnation of the known and avowed panders of corruption, but has even ventured to pry into the very recesses of *seeming* piety, and even patriotism itself; and I am the more indignant at this, as it has not even spared a once very popular leader of reform, who had for the last fifteen years been strenuously stimulating them by every possible means in his power, to divest themselves of their prejudice for rank and fortune, rather than for liberty and justice, and reprobating the pretenders to moderation, in terms of the bitterest reproach. Even these strong proofs of patriotism, it seems, are not sufficient for a set of people who call themselves reformers. They are presumptuous enough to expect, that, having in consequence of these incentives, made great exertions, and suffered unheard of persecutions, they are entitled to require the same disposition and zeal from their leader, whom they fail to recollect is in the possession of an ample fortune, and does not need reform.

They have even charged their champion with *desertion*, because, whilst they were hunted down by their enemies and oppressors, *he* was taking a little innocent diversion in a chace of a very different description. And when they had assembled at great personal risk, expence, and inconvenience, to honour him, as they fondly imagined, with their confidence and petitions, they were audacious enough to

expect, that he would have met them with alacrity, and absent himself from his pleasures of the country a few days sooner than his parliamentary duties required him. Oh! vain expectation. Monstrous presumption!

Has he not condescended to make nearly fifty long speeches for them? *presided* at nearly as many public dinners or meetings? Has he not also persuaded some of his very "*particular friends*" to accept of their votes, and has he not suffered himself to be forced into the "room" or den, and exposed himself to the seduction of "bad company and late hours?" And has he not condescended to tell his accusers, who charge him with *desertion*, that "he defies any man to accuse him of *inconsistency*?"

And when he had charged a certain assembly with being composed of venal tools, rather than representatives of the People for many years, does he not move for a committee of *enquiry* into the state of the representation?

And does he not scorn to seek popularity, and refuse to be "made a puppet of," and then travel two hundred miles to dine with a political smoking club, to uphold its declining destiny?

Perhaps it might be alledging too much in his favour, to say, that his partiality for the reformers was so great, that he had generously made advances of money to needy political writers, for the purpose of chaining them to his chariot wheels. But really, Sir, *when* we consider these things as proofs of his sincerity and patriotism, how unreasonable must be the expectations of the reformers, in requiring any specific charge of corruption in St. Stephen's, any impeachments or motions for a bill on the subject of reform, any proposition in Westminster in favour of the justly denominated father of that reform, or any rejection of the fulsome adulation of certain political adventurers or time-serving toad-eaters. If a fortune of thirty thousand a year is not sufficient to exempt a man from such expectations, I cannot see the value of wealth, and must set down the radical reformers as nothing but a race of desperate levellers, instead of well meaning and rational beings.

Yours, &c.

Liverpool, December 6, 1818.

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